

£50,000 saved—thank you, Mr Healey!

CHANCELLORS of the Exchequer have come to expect more brick-bats than bouquets when they present their Budgets, but Chancellor Healey's tenth Budget proved that, when it came to the handicapped and the problems they face, the

Chancellor was not without a heart.

The Chancellor's red dispatch case held two major benefits for the disabled when he went to the House of Commons to present his Budget proposals last week.

Mr Healey's decision not to go ahead with the proposed two per cent surcharge on National Insurance contributions by

employers where charities are concerned, will mean a nett saving of between £40-£50,000 for The Spastics Society.

When the Chancellor first proposed the surcharge last July, due to come into effect on April 6, the Society was in the vanguard of the lobby to exclude charities from its imposition. It would have meant the Society having to find an extra £93,000

gross annually and it would have been the first time charities were directly taxed.

In his Budget speech, Mr Healey said that his decision followed the representations made to him by charities. 'I have considered the representations very carefully and I have concluded that there is a strong case for relief in view of the special position of these organisations. Many charities perform

valuable work in the community and the Government would not wish to see them hampered as a result of the operation of the surcharge,' he said.

A Society spokesman commented: 'It is a relief to know that the Chancellor has been able to respond favourably to the representations made on behalf of charitable organisations to relieve them of this additional burden.'

Mr Healey also announced a year-long

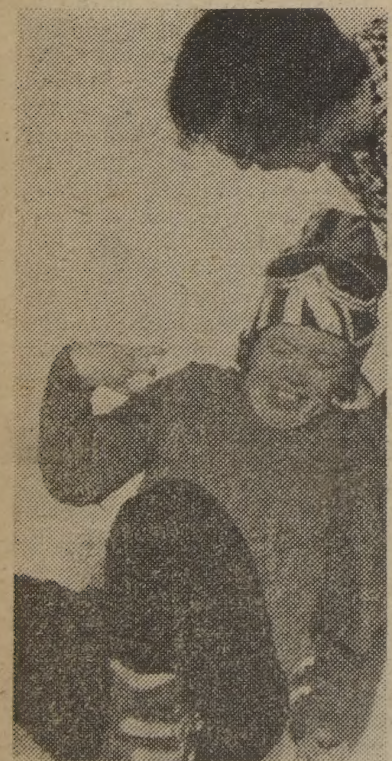
experimental job-introduction scheme for disabled people. Its aim is to encourage employers to take on the handicapped on a six-week trial basis to demonstrate their ability to do a job. The employer would receive £30 a week towards the worker's wages and the Manpower Services Commission estimate that up to 2,000 disabled people could benefit at a gross cost of £360,000.

Going up...



ANDREW Jessop, from Sherrards Training Centre, Hertfordshire, starts his climb at a skiing holiday for spastics in Italy. Full report and more pictures on page 5.

...And down



FALLING over was all part of the fun. Sally Johnson, a Sherrards trainee, is helped up by instructor Peter Crosland.

The Mount to close—parents lose 'lifeline'

CONTINUALLY rising costs and the effect of inflation on voluntary funds have forced The Spastics Society to move out of some areas of work where it has little support from statutory bodies.

As a result, its Nottingham Family Help Unit, called The Mount, which has catered for up to 12 children, and also provided nursery school facilities for a further 15 children, will close on April 5.

This unit, which was set up in 1964, has acted as a lifeline to thousands of parents of severely handicapped children aged two-16 years by providing them with short term care facilities during times of domestic crises and family holidays, as well as with nursery schooling for some children under five.

Many of the children who attended the Nottingham unit were both mentally and physically handicapped. The severity of their handicaps demanded a high staff ratio.

This, coupled with under-use of the unit as local authorities' own financial problems resulted in their cutting back on sponsoring children to attend the unit, means that the Society must this year meet a deficit on running costs of £40,000. And, says Mr Derek Lancaster-Gaye, the Society's Director of Resources, 'in the present financial climate we just cannot afford to cope with such high revenue costs.'

'Now those local authorities which made use of The Mount for either casual short-term care or nursery schooling must accept full responsibility for the children who are displaced.'

No decision has yet been made about The Mount's future, but it is possible that it may be re-used eventually as a residential school for severely handicapped cerebral palsied children, aged five-16. As such it would attract financial support from local education authorities.

However, no firm plans for

the unit's future can be made until the Society has completed its current review of future plans for development of its services, and costed these against projected income.

The Society was also facing difficulties in maintaining its Southampton Family Help Unit because of high deficit running costs, and had been forced to consider its closure, too. Instead, however, this unit—which presently accommodates nine children aged two-16 years—will be handed over at a peppercorn rent to the Southampton and District Spastics Association.

The Southampton group have received a £22,000 grant from the Area Health Authority to keep the unit open for one year in view of the vital community service that it provides. However, its future, beyond the summer of 1978, remains uncertain.

Meantime the Southampton Family Help Unit will cater for children with all types of handicap.

Alison touched hearts at home and abroad

THE appeal of little Alison did not only touch the hearts of the public in this country when she appeared on a fund-raising poster. The story of Alison, aged 10, and her determination to overcome her handicaps at the Society's Meldreth Manor School brought a response from the Little Aden Ladies Social and Welfare Group, in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

So impressed were

they by Alison's endeavours and achievements, for she is both mentally and physically handicapped but has persevered to walk instead of crawl and can now ride a trike, that they immediately posted a cheque for £150 to The Society.

The group learnt of the Meldreth Manor School appeal through their honorary secretary, Mrs E. Tuckett, whose home address is in Surrey, but who is living in Little Aden.

Moment of triumph



THE unforgettable and moving moment of triumph — newly experienced by Joe Hughes, remembered by last year's winner Alyn Haskey and shared by Chairman Dorrien Belson as he presents the Society's Special Achievement Award Silver Cup to Joe Hughes. Full story on pages 6 and 7.

Business booms

A NEWLY-opened spastics shop in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, sold out twice in the first day of trading. The doors had to be closed at lunchtime while stocks were replenished and the something happened again later in the day.

Manageress Mrs Beryl Smiddy estimates that they had 2,500 customers on the first day. There was a constant queue outside and people had to be let into the shop a few at a time.

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Welfare: No easy choices

THERE were 'no easy choices' in allocating priorities for welfare benefits, Mr Stanley Orme, Minister for Social Security, told a Welfare Rights Seminar at the University of Salford.

Mr Orme spoke of 'the four pillars of the social security system' he wanted to see — earnings related pensions; the child benefit scheme which would give further economic independence to women; special aid to one-parent families and the extension of benefits to the disabled.

But, he added, the full development of these aims would entail more public expenditure, which raised the issue of priorities. It had to be decided how much public expenditure was to go to social security and how much to other desirable things like education, housing and urban renewal.

'We also have to decide our priorities within social security expenditure,' concluded Mr Orme. 'Should the disabled get priority over family support, for example? There is no easy choice.'

You can come in, or 'phone in, for help

A UNIQUE scheme to help the handicapped has been launched in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. It is the Advice Centre for the Disabled in the town's High Street and it has been officially opened by Charles Irving, Cheltenham's MP.

Since then Tom Lewis, aged 24, the centre's manager, and his staff have been dealing with an average of 30 clients a week in the office and Tom has lost count of the number of phone calls asking for help.

He said: 'The centre rose out of an idea from Grace Knowler, Cheltenham and District Spastics Group welfare worker, and Peter Warwick, area social services director, after the

BBC TV programme "Contact" showed the work of a "phone-in" advice bureau in Manchester.'

They both felt this idea could usefully be extended so that people could come in as well as phone for advice. 'I was brought in on the scheme and we opened the office on January 31. After television coverage of our work the response went wild but it has steadied down to about 30 visitors a week now,' he said.

Unaware

'They come in the main to find out just what exists for the disabled—most of them are very unaware in this field. Apart from queries about entitlements and allowances some of them want to talk over problems connected with their disability or else domestic or emotional problems. We also want to make the general public aware of the problems of disability—you could say that was our biggest problem.'

Tom, whose family live in Cheltenham, was educated at

the Society's Thomas Delarue School and Mid-Gloucester Technical College where he was President of the Students' Union for two years.

'I was unemployed for two years until this came up, although I spent 18 months working for the social services. I am mildly athetoid and I think it helps people when they come in—there is a feeling of rapport between us. Certainly from my point of view I think that if I was to come in and see an able-bodied person sitting in this chair I'd feel less likely to talk about my problems.'

'We are different from the Manchester scheme. That is a voluntary effort centred round the phone. We are an official set-up.'

Although the advice centre uses voluntary help, it has been funded through the government's job creation programme and the premises have been adapted for access.

The Advice Centre for the Disabled is at 311 High Street, Cheltenham, and the phone number is 0242 43030. The centre operates normal business hours, Monday to Friday.

Making good friends and new neighbours

A SOUTH London launderette run by spastic workers was opened recently by Yootha Joyce and Brian Murphy, stars of the popular television series 'George and Mildred.' The couple were appearing as the Ugly Sisters in the Palladium pantomime, 'Cinderella,' and Mr Murphy delighted on-lookers at the launderette by producing his 'washing'—a vast pair of lace-trimmed pink bloomers which were part of his costume in the show.

Next door to the launderette pianist Bobby Crush cut the tape across the entrance to a gift shop. This will sell such

items as hand-made pine furniture, pottery, glassware, basketwork and general 'habitatery.'

The launderette and shop are part of Good Neighbours' House in Camberwell, an exciting new project launched and financed by the Stars Organisation for Spastics. It is a residential centre for spastic adults—purpose built as part of a new housing estate—a close of three-storey buildings in warm red brick. The complex as a whole is on an infinitely more human scale than the surrounding concrete tower blocks.

The first spastic residents arrived in January and eventually there will be accommodation for 26 people, including married couples. Single residents each have a bright, comfortably-furnished bed-sitter, while couples have both bedroom and living room. There are small TV rooms on the first and second floors with facilities for making hot drinks, as well as the large downstairs sitting room.

Most of the residents are in wheelchairs and the building is designed to give them maximum independence, although there is a bleep system for calling staff in an emergency. Two of the young women who had come to London from Spastic Society centres in isolated country mansions spoke of their delight at being able to wheel themselves out to nearby shops and into the everyday bustle of urban life.

As the Good Neighbours House residents were among the first people to move into the new estate, there were none of the usual problems of integrating with an established community. The launderette, and to a lesser extent, the shop will provide an essential service for the neighbourhood and the disabled people running them hope to make plenty of friends among their customers.

Holidays for young people

GROUP holidays for a mixture of handicapped and able-bodied young people will be held by the Inter-School Christian Fellowship in Devon and Sussex this summer.

A houseparty at Holcombe Down, Teignmouth, Devon, from July 28 to August 8 is open to people between 19 and 25. This costs £22 (including a booking fee of £3). The holiday at Pilgrims, Seaford, Sussex, is for those aged 16 and over. Dates are August 4-16, and the price is £19.50p.

Both holidays offer varied programmes with plenty of scope for games, hobbies, swimming and visits to places of interest. Each day there will be informal prayers and discussions on the Christian faith and its application to everyday life. In both cases there will be a trained nurse on duty.

Application forms from 16+ activities, Inter-School Christian Fellowship, 47 Marylebone Lane, London, W1M 6AX.

All day effort was a real snip

THERE were some sore fingers in Addlestone Girls' Brigade Company, Surrey, when 70 members spent a day cutting used postage stamps from envelopes in a three-way charity effort. The stamps were donated to White Lodge Spastics Centre and the Baptist Missionary Society. The girls' stint with the scissors was sponsored on behalf of Brigade funds.

School for blind helps new centre

CHILDREN from an Edinburgh school for the blind held a jumble sale which raised £10 for the new Trinity Centre for Spastics in the Scottish capital. A group of the blind youngsters, aged between eight and ten, visited the centre to hear how the money would be spent.

'Thank you' party for anniversary

COLCHESTER and District Spastics Society in Essex has celebrated its 21st anniversary with a special 'thank you' party for 30 past committee members who had devoted time and energy to help the cause. Compered for the evening was Mr George Young, a former chairman, whose wife Eve has served on the committee since the earliest days.

Brisk business

A SHOP run by the Peterborough and District Spastics Society raised £1,500 in 12 weeks' trading.

Technology in practice

STUDY days on educational technology for the handicapped child are to be held in the North of England during May. The first is at Earl's House Hospital, Durham, on Saturday, May 7. (Details from A. West, Earl's House Unit Administrator. Tel Durham 64911.)

The other will take place on Sunday, May 8, at Sandfield Park School, Liverpool 12. (Details from R. M. Palser, Headmaster. Tel 051 228 0324.)

Both study days will cost £5.50, including refreshments, payable in advance. Parents are specially welcome at a reduced rate of £3.00. The courses, lasting from 9.20 am to 5.20 pm, will cover a broad range of technical aids, equipment and techniques developed for physically and mentally handicapped children.

Studies are essentially of a practical nature and ample opportunity will be given for discussion and to try equipment being demonstrated. Small exhibitions will also be mounted. The study days will be of interest to teachers, therapists, educational psychologists, health visitors, social workers, house parents and all who work with physically and mentally handicapped children.

Buffet dance boost

A CHARITY buffet dance held at the Huntsman Inn, Penton, brought in £145 for Brampton branch of Cumbria Spastics Society.

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You should claim now if your child is aged 5 or over (i.e. if he or she was born before 14.4.72).

Severely disabled adults up to the age of 50 who have not claimed already should do so immediately. Others under pension age will qualify later.

Fill in the coupon so that we can send you leaflet NI.211 which includes a claim form and tells you more about the scheme. Or you can ask at your local Social Security office.



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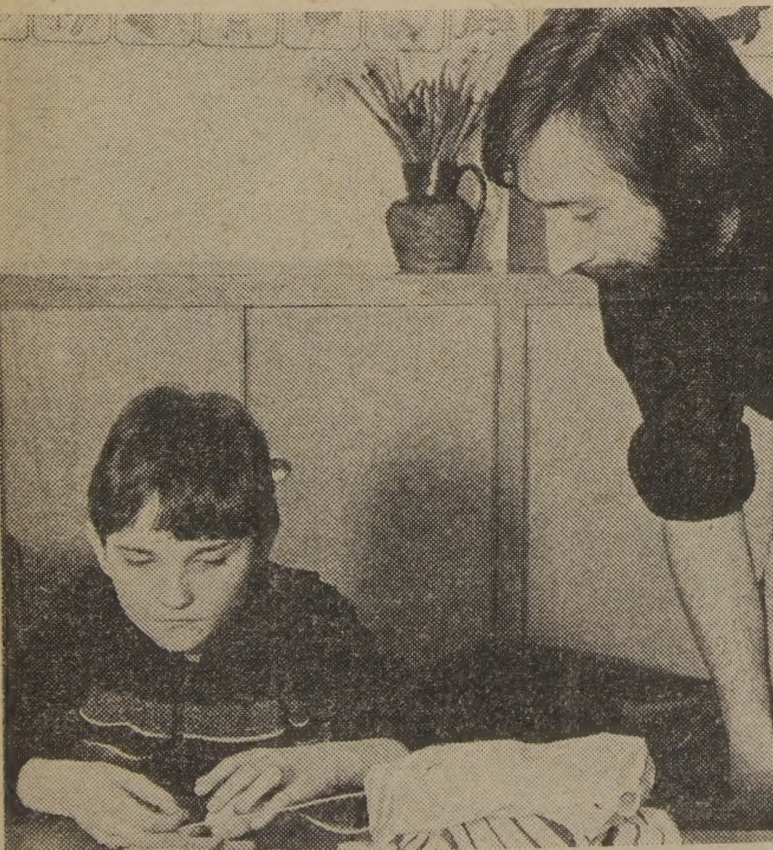
Their combined operations



JEAN Selwyn, chairman of the Alison House management committee, makes friends with two of the guests. Jean, who is also senior welfare visitor of the Westminster Society for Mentally Handicapped Children was one of the people who pioneered the idea of short-stay homes in Central London.



PETER and Pamela tidy up after a game in the quiet room overlooking the courtyard at the back of the house.



GRAHAM Pitney, deputy to the matron, offers advice on a construction project in the playroom.

New home will help in times of need

ALISON House is the first home of its kind to be opened in central London — a short-stay unit for children who are physically disabled, mentally handicapped or both. The result of a unique co-operative venture between three charities and a local authority, it is designed to provide emergency care in times of family crisis or to give parents an occasional break from the constant burden of looking after a severely handicapped child.

The charities involved are the Catholic Handicapped Children's Society, the Westminster Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and The Spastics Society. Westminster City Council supplied a rambling 19th Century House in North-West London at a peppercorn rent, the three charities each put up £7,000 for conversions and The Spastics Society provided architectural services. Originally built as a home for a large Victorian family, it is now decorated in warm colours to provide a welcoming non-institutional atmosphere.

Places for 14

There are places for 14 residents, aged from two to 21, who may stay for a few days or a few weeks, according to family circumstances. Accommodation is in one, three, four and six-bedded rooms. Local children staying there continue to attend their own schools daily while those from further afield have plenty of activities to keep them busy at Alison House. Apart from the main play area-cum-dining room, which resounds with pop music, there is a quiet room where residents can enjoy an undisturbed game of chess or scrabble.

Jane Reynolds, the attractive young matron, stresses that Alison House is essentially a family place. 'We aim to create the sort of loving homely care that an aunt or uncle might give,' she said.

The centre also provides a valuable continuity in the lives of its visitors. Many of the children may often need to return for short spells, and coming back to familiar surroundings will help to ease the pangs of homesickness.

Miss Reynolds has three residential and four living-out day care staff, plus three people who share night duties, a cleaner and a part-time cook. There is also an enthusiastic band of voluntary helpers—



CHILDREN, staff and voluntary helpers gather round the large table for a 'family-style' lunch.

including Miss Reynolds' four-year-old Bassett Hound, Emily, who submits good-humouredly to the children's energetic fondling and tail-pulling.

As in any family the large basement kitchen is a focus of activity. Residents are often to be found 'helping cook,' or gathered for a snack around the scrubbed wooden table.

Desperate need

One of the people who first envisaged such a unit in central London was Jean Selwyn, now chairman of the management committee. In her work as welfare visitor for the Westminster Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, she realised that there was a desperate need for some kind of short-stay unit to ease the pressure on parents in the capital. Then she visited Honeylands, the well-known centre in Devon which pioneered this type of family support with such resounding success. (Honeylands and its work was recently featured in *Spastics News*.)

'Honeylands was our inspiration,' she told *Spastic News*, at an open day held to introduce Alison House to the public. 'But of course, they are part of a big hospital and have got all the resources of the National Health Service behind them. We can only hope to reproduce their work on a very small scale but at least we are trying to do something.'

RIGHT: Matron Jane Reynolds and young Becky find a quiet corner in one of the bedrooms to read a story.



JENNIFER, a young volunteer and one of the senior residents, dry the dishes after lunch.



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What Wendy, Tracey and Dale did...

WE were touched to read the following letter, published in Watford Evening Echo:

I'm writing to tell you about my friends Dale Gibson, Tracey Foster and I. We are all 13 years old.

In the past two years we have raised £114 for charity by having a jumble sale, a quiz, a raffle and a stall at the school's summer fête. We also sold drinks on sports day. We used up most of our time doing this but we also had a lot of fun.

The places we raised the money for, an old people's home and the North Watford spastics centre, both invited us to look round. We were also invited back by the spastics centre to see what they had bought with money we raised.

I hope you will publish my letter. Maybe someone else will try to do what we did.

Yours truly,
Wendy Emmett.

Offers and wants

SCHOOLS, centres, voluntary groups, individual spastic people and their families are reminded that they can advertise their 'Offers and Wants' free of charge. Send them to the Editor at Society headquarters, 12 Park Crescent, London W1.

FOR sale: BEC portable electric wheelchair, four years old but little used. In good condition. Including batteries. Control knob and lever right hand side. £150 or near offer. Can be seen by appointment.—Miss D. I. E. Jayne, Wyckstones, Hilcote Drive, Bourton-on-Water, Cheltenham, Glos GL54 2DU. (Tel: Bourton-on-Water 21125.)

FOR sale: Chairmobile. £90 or nearest offer.—Write Mrs R. Bond, 13 Birchfield Avenue, Beacon Park, Plymouth, Devon PC2 3LA (or telephone Plymouth 51998).

FOR SALE: Everest and Jennings power drive chair, Mark 4A, very little used, in excellent condition. Complete with battery charger, long flex lead, battery tester, water-proof apron. £60 or near offer. For inspection and trial run, write Mr W. B. Plant, 1 Mattersey Court, Mansfield, Notts. NG19 7DB.

BATTERY operated electric wheelchair for sale. Excellent condition. Price £350.—G. M. V. Rashbrook, White House, 40 The Crescent, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent.

Holiday spirits at the Royal Hotel

THEY were throwing money around at the Royal Hotel in Lancaster when a presentation of £370 was made to the Lancaster, Morecambe and District Spastics Society. The money included the contents of a bottle placed on the bar and the proceeds of several raffles held among the pub's regulars. It will be used to provide a holiday at Ellerslie Court, Southport, in July for some of the group's children and

adult helpers.

On the right of the picture is Mrs Audrey Fielding, landlady of the Royal Hotel, who was largely responsible for the fund-raising efforts. On the left is Jacqueline Wilkinson, who received the cash on behalf of the Lancaster, Morecambe and District Group. In between are the Mayor of Lancaster, Councillor Peter Sumner and his wife.

Picture by courtesy of Lancaster Guardian.

APRIL COOKERY

DON'T be an April Fool this year! It doesn't matter in the least if your practical joking catches you out on the first of the month, it is the rest of April that needs a bit of care.

Well, it does when you are shopping at least, to make sure you are not talked into making money-wasting purchases!

This is the between-seasons time for home-grown vegetables. Winter crops are coming to an end and spring produce is only just beginning. Try not to be tempted into getting second-rate stuff at premium prices.

Although eating apples are getting harder to find, cooking apples should be both plentiful and sound. Rhubarb—the outdoor-grown varieties—will also help with ideas for puddings. Choose rhubarb that is firm, of good colour, certainly not limp, brown at the tips, slimy looking or coarse.

Rhubarb is ideal for many recipes, both hot and cold. Here is one suitable for Easter, for when guests come or for any day of the week:

MOCK RHUBARB JELLY (serves 4)

1½ lb rhubarb, cut into pieces
1 pint water
Caster sugar to sweeten
Cornflour
1oz flaked almonds

Place rhubarb in a pan with the water. Cover and cook gently until tender. Sieve or liquidise. Sweeten as desired. Measure rhubarb liquid and allow one teaspoon of cornflour for every quarter pint. Mix with a little cold water. Return rhubarb to pan. Heat. Stir in cornflour. Bring to the boil to thicken. This should not be too thick. Pour into four individual dishes, sprinkle with a little caster sugar to prevent a skin forming. Decorate with almonds. Serve when cold with fresh double cream.

Surrey site chosen for Jubilee camp

A JUBILEE camp for mentally-handicapped over 16-year-olds is being held by Croydon Social Services Department. It will take place from June 4-11 1977 in collaboration with the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and the Federation of Gateway Clubs.

It will be held at Parsons Fightle, Old Coulsdon, Surrey, in open countryside with easy access to both London and the South Coast. The site can cope comfortably with up to 1,000 campers.

Participating groups will be expected to provide their own equipment, food and helpers but Croydon will be able to give advice and practical help if needed and will act as resident hosts.

Applications are invited from groups throughout the United Kingdom. Details from National Jubilee Camp for the Mentally Handicapped, Social Services Dept, Taberner House (Room 2-02), Park Lane, Croydon, CR9 2BA (telephone: 01-686 4433, extension 2533 or 2740).

It's all free

SPASTIC children, aged between eight and 11, are invited to have a holiday, free of charge, by Ruislip Christian Council, during the week July 29 to August 5.

Among the entertainments and outings planned for the children are visits to Buckingham Palace, Windsor Safari Park and Ruislip police station and there will be parties, conjuring shows and films packed into the week as well. The holidays have been run by the council for a number of years and feature in a specially made film which can be hired from The Spastics Society's film library.

There are places for 20 children and they will be accommodated in two dormitories in a modern church hall.

How would you rate as a good Samaritan?

'IF you instinctively feel irritated when a friend calls with a problem, would you make a good Samaritan? ... If you faint at the sight of blood, would the St John organisation really welcome you? ... If you shy away from disagreeing with people, would politics really suit?'

These are just a few of the ways in which, according to the author of a new book, readers can ask themselves, 'What type of a volunteer am I?'

'Working for Free' by Sheila Moore, is a practical and extremely readable guide for volunteers. The author claims that there has never been a better time to work for free

because present-day volunteering doesn't have to be all addressing envelopes and rattling tins on street corners if one's talents happen to lie in a different direction.

The book includes an extremely useful self-assessment questionnaire designed to help the reader decide what type of work would be most suited to his or her personality. This is divided into three sections—'The basic facts about you,' 'What are you like?' and 'What do you like?'

Factual matters include such aspects as personal and work

commitments, spare time available, skills and talents, previous experience of voluntary work.

The personality assessment section is the longest and includes such questions as 'Which two of the listed adjectives would you most (and least) like to hear applied to you?' 'Choose the alternative that describes you best and that which best expresses your opinion.' 'In an emergency (or when you see a severely disabled person or when faced with mental illness) your first instinctive reaction is ...' 'The most important things in life to you are ...'

Your likes

The third section, 'What do you like?' asks, for instance, 'Which of these job-ads would most interest you?' 'If you had money to give away, which organisation would you choose to give it to?' 'After a day's work, you most like to spend the evening ...' 'Did you like wearing a uniform?' 'What has been the most enjoyable experience of your life?'

The author says, 'for most of the questions you are the best person to work out the implications,' but she offers a few guidelines as to interpretations including those quoted at the beginning of this review. Other comments include, 'If you instinctively feel distaste at the sight of severe disability, it is difficult not to have disabled people sense it,' and 'The official attitude towards the mentally ill is to help them in the community if possible. ... Some professionals feel quite strongly that amateurs should not meddle with the mentally ill.'

The book points out that opportunities for volunteers are now extremely varied and helpfully divides the field into five categories—voluntary organisations that give service, voluntary organisations that recruit volunteers directly, self-help and pressure groups and politics and public service.

The book can be dipped into for the vast amount of practical information it contains but it is also an exceptionally good straight-through read, giving entertaining insights into the psychology of volunteers and some of the people they aim to help.

'Working for Free,' by Sheila Moore, is published by Pan Books, price 75p.

Dental care is 'bad or non-existent'

THE mentally and physically handicapped were among five groups singled out in a special report as receiving bad dental service. The criticism came from five Labour MPs who prepared the report for submission to the Royal Commission on the Health Service and in it they claimed many people were getting inferior dental treatment from the National Health Service or even none at all.

Since the report by Laurie Pavitt, Frank Hatton, Brian Davies, Harry Lamborn, Renee Short and dental experts was published, it has been attacked by the British Dental Association as 'baseless and dangerous nonsense' but when Mr Pavitt went on BBC Radio 2's Jimmy Young Show a listener rang in to deplore the care of a spastic's teeth.

Parents of spastic children concerned for their children's teeth can obtain 'A guide to the care of your child's mouth' published by the Society at 35p from the Society's headquarters: 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Well done said Dutch princess



PRINCESS Margriet of the Dutch Royal Family congratulates the English riding team which included Timothy Richards, 18, Alan Bagshaw, 18, Peter Chadwick, 16, Anthony Griffin, 16 and Stephen Kerry, 16, who displayed

their horsemanship in a riding display to celebrate the centenary of the Johanna-sticking Centre for the Disabled, Arnhem, Holland.

The invitation to ride came from the Centre's riding master, Mr J. Marschalk who was impressed

by the standard of riding by English handicapped riders at a seminar at Arnhem the previous year and the five riders were selected after proving the top competitors at The Spastics Society's gymkhana at Buckingham Palace recently.

Ski youngsters adapt to a new challenge



JANICE Metcalf had come all the way from Castle Barnard, Co Durham, to join the party.

SKI-ING holidays are the latest activity to be pioneered by The Spastics Society, and in March a party of 15 young people returned to Britain glowing with sunburn and vitality from the slopes of the Dolomites. The venture was the idea of Dr David Morris, a consultant paediatrician associated

with the Society and himself an expert skier.

Dr Morris led the party and arrangements for the week's stay at the Italian mountain resort of San Valentino were made by the Society's Holidays Section. Hire of equipment and the services of a local instructor were part of the holiday package.

The young skiers, aged between 16 and 26 and all lightly handicapped, came from the Society's Thomas Delarue School and Sherrards Training Centre or were individually chosen from the Holiday Section's mailing list. All those who took part had to be able to balance on one leg and pick themselves up if they fell down. Only one person arrived back with the status symbol of a limb in plaster—Paul Hitchcock, 18,

who broke a leg on the last day.

Dr Morris told Spastics News: 'The Swiss have taken spastics ski-ing, so I thought why shouldn't we? All the members of our party went on to the slopes and the trip has established without doubt that spastics can ski. It was a total success. I hope this will be the beginning of many such winter holidays.'

Unorthodox

Both Dr Morris and the local instructor, who have never taught disabled people before, were surprised how easily the young people adapted their bodies to the unaccustomed activity. They could fall without hurting themselves and although some adopted unorthodox techniques like using only one stick, every-

body found his or her own way of coping with new patterns of movement.

Dr Morris thought even more could have been achieved if boots or skis could have been adapted to suit individual handicaps.



DOCTOR David Morris, who led the party, sets out marker posts.

Plenty of room in narrow boats

DEVOTEES of Kenneth Grahame's children's classic 'Wind in the Willows' will recall that it was Ratty who opined that 'there is nothing, nothing like messing about in boats' — a sentiment shared by 20 pupils at the Society's Meldreth Manor School who at the end of this month will be doing just that. Except that with the close supervision of 11 staff, for the week-long holiday north along the Grand Union Canal to Lower Weedon there will not be any 'messing about' likely to lead to accidents.

It is the third year running that Ken Osborne, Head of the Senior Schools, has organised this highly popular holiday. The cost is around £450 — and already £300 has been found. Alan Counsell is the fundraiser who gets the money through running bingo sessions for local villagers, and a second-hand clothing shop in the school grounds. Some parents also make contributions up to £10.

Ken explained: 'We hire the narrow boats from the Wyvern Shipping Company of Leighton Buzzard who let us have four narrow boats at half the low season price. The company belongs to Major Griffin, whose daughter Susan was a pupil here about four years ago. I think he must have designed the narrow boats with Susan in mind because they are absolutely ideal for giving handicapped children a boating holiday — there is plenty of room to get wheelchairs on board.'



JANICE Metcalf, Co Durham, Josephine Evans from Stourbridge, Marilyn Wood from Lancashire, and Nicholas Haigh from Wigan, look rather sad on the coach that took them part of their journey home.

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TIRED out after a week in the open air, Tony Griffin of Thomas Delarue School, sleeps peacefully on the homeward journey.

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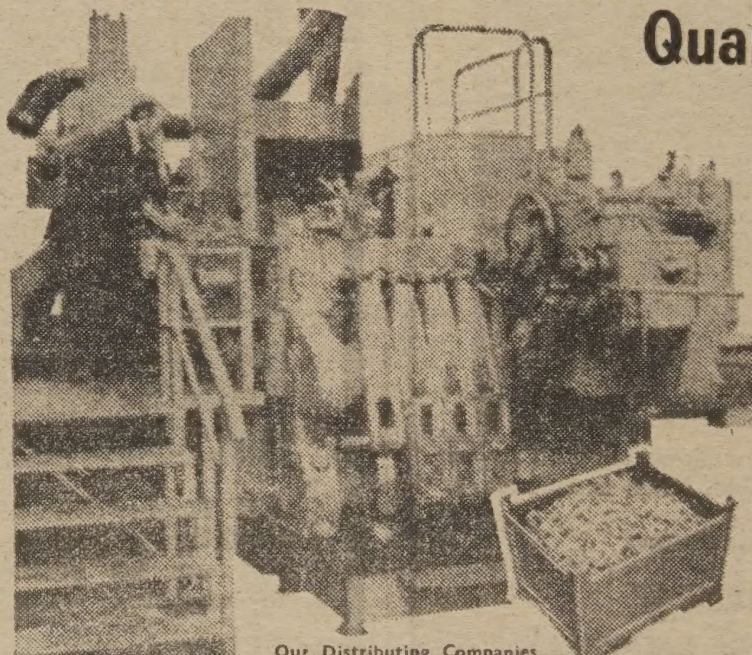
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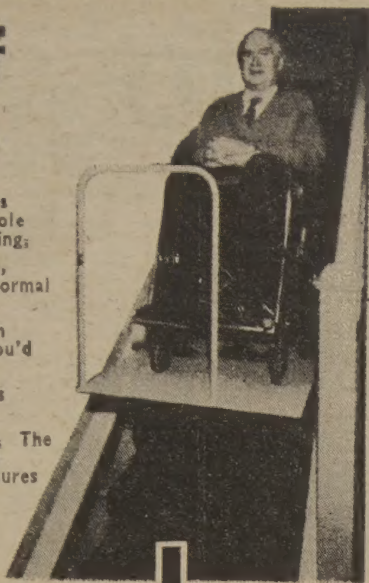
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Awards for 'such very

Judges faced hard task in cho

CORBET Woodall, TV personality and himself crippled by arthritis, summed it all up when he said of the Society's fifth Achievement Award's nine finalists — 'It was an absolutely impossible task — you are all such very remarkable people. I know I speak for my fellow judges when I say it has been a privilege to learn about you.'

He was echoing the words of both the Society's Chairman, Mr Dorrien Belson, and Mr Leslie Knight, general manager of J. H. Dewhurst Ltd, who provided the prize money.

It was the second year that Dewhurst's, the nationwide chain of butchers, had provided the prize money for the Achievement Award. The winner, Joe Hughes of Belfast, won £250 and was presented with the Silver Award cup by Mr Belson. Second was William Keown, also of Belfast, who won £25, and the joint third prize of

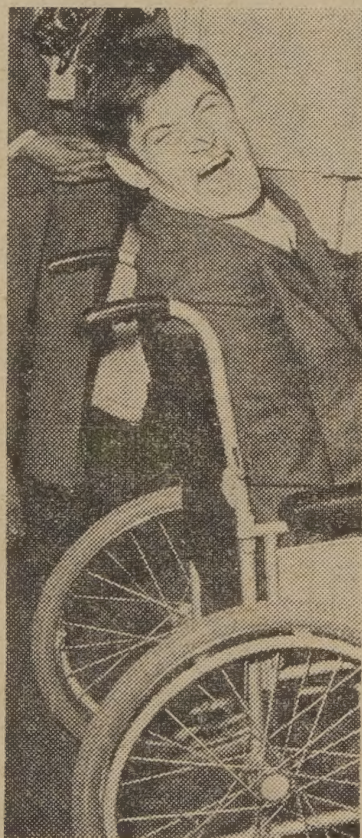
£15 each went to Mrs Jennifer Weller, of West Malling, Kent, and John Bonser, of Manchester. The other finalists were presented with £5 premium bonds and inscribed medals.

There had been 300 names put forward for the Award, and Mr Belson said in his speech of welcome at the Society's headquarters: 'The judges have had a very much harder task than in previous years in making their selection. Each one of the nine selected to come here today have, to my mind, won far more than we can give them in terms of cups and money and medals. They have the continuous award of what they have achieved by way of independence through their own efforts.'

The judges were headed by Lord Crawshaw who was unable to be present at the ceremony through illness. His place was taken by Mr Ken Long, managing director of Top Ten Promotions Ltd, which runs the Spastics Pool. Norman Croucher, who lost his legs at 19 and went on to become a mountaineer, climbing Mont Blanc, the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn and Eiger; Corbet Woodall and Ann Darnbrough, assistant general secretary of the Multiple Sclerosis Society made up the rest of the panel.

Whoop of joy from Joe—

Society's man of courage



JOE Hughes' face reflects his delight at winning. He will use his prizemoney for a holiday.

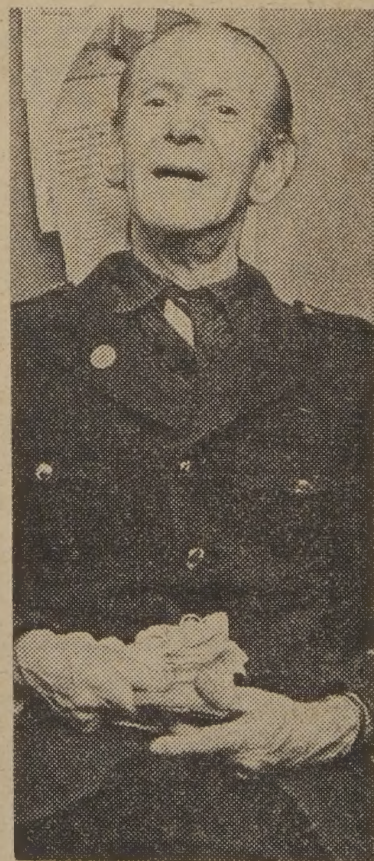
IT was with a whoop of sheer joy that Joe Hughes heard The Spastics Society's Chairman, Dorrien Belson, announce that he had won the Society's 1976 Special Achievement Award of an inscribed silver cup and £250.

In a moving award ceremony at the Society's headquarters in March, the audience gasped with astonishment at the magnitude of Joe's achievements read by Mr Belson from the citation prepared by Mr Raymond King, who nominated Joe, who is 34 and comes from Ballymurphy, Belfast, Ulster.

Joe has been handicapped since birth. Both arms are affected and both

legs, save for the ability to push with his left foot by which he propels his wheelchair backwards. Spasticity also affects his vocal chords so that apart from a few laboured words like "Thank you," he is unable to speak.

'Combine these grave disabilities with the fact that he is the eldest of a family of seven, that his father and mother are deaf and dumb, that his family's economic circumstances are, to say the least, poor, that he lives in one of the most troubled areas of



JOHN Bonser, joint third prizewinner, not only spends his days helping his neighbours and raising money for charity, but in his limited spare time has started on his autobiography which will tell of his 30-year fight to prove his sanity.

Belfast, and one would assume that here is justification for self-pity and introversion. Not so, for the list of disadvantages has to be balanced by the



IT was a dog that helped Joe made herself useful when Mr in the company of her sons Ja

qualities of the human spirit which Joe possesses in abundance — courage, faith, determination, hope, endeavour and love.

'Although Joe is most certainly above average, intelligence he spent most of his early life from eight to 14 in mental institutions. From the age of 15 to 22 he was a resident in a special care unit. In 1965 he joined a local youth club whose members provided the finance to send him to Lourdes. In 1968 he went again, this time earning the money himself by running a mail order catalogue club. In 1969 he joined the Northern Ireland Group of the Disabled Drivers' Association.

'It is estimated that Joe has been personally responsible for collecting more than one-third of the group's income—about £8,000 over the past five years.

'In April, 1975, Joe saw a film on the work of Oxfam and determined at once to do something to help the people of the "Third World." On a cold, continuously rainy day, Joe pushed himself backwards with his left foot only, the 10 miles from Belfast to Hollywood, taking seven hours, to collect £1,200 in sponsorship money for Oxfam. He repeated this feat in September, raising over £2,800, which put Northern Ireland as the "top region" for

Cont on Page 8



SUE Smith of Durham is no stranger to award ceremonies at the Society's headquarters for her abilities and talents are widespread — she has already won a literary award. She is pictured here with her husband Ken. They were married five months ago.

remarkable people'

ing winners

James Loring, the Society's Director, presented his special prize to 12-year-old Susan Flanagan, from Liverpool, who with courage for herself, dashed into the path of a car to save a four-year-old boy from being run over.

In his speech, Mr Knight, whose firm not only provided the prizes but the bronze medals and some of the expenses, said how pleased Dewhurst's were to be able to play a role in the Award. 'At the end of last year's ceremony I was moved and elated by the courage and good humour shown by the finalists in the face of adversity. The courageous finalists are the real heroes of our society.'

William Keown, 41, decided to use his £25 second prize to help the disabled. William, who doctors would never survive infancy, is a businessman of considerable standing in Ulster where his shop, factory and mail business provides employment for well over 100 people.

Jennifer Weller, of West Malling, Kent, received two citations—one of them from her 11-year-old son Joseph, who said his citation with the words: 'My mum is a spastic. She is the best mum in the world.' He ended by saying: 'I think she is fantastic.'

Reading the citation, Mr Belson added: 'And I do, too!'



Weller to walk as a child. So naturally, Gretel collected her joint-third prize from Mr Belson and Joseph.



Prize for 'impulsive' Susan

SUSAN Flanagan's moment of heroism came last summer the day she dashed into the road to rescue a toddler from the path of a car. Plucky Susan's impulsive action undoubtedly saved the life of a neighbour's two-year-old son. But for Susan it meant two months in pain as she lay with plaster on her broken leg. For the car

LITTLE Susan Flanagan poses prettily with the Society's Director, James Loring, after he had awarded his special prize to her of a watch, book and medal as a mark of her courage when she saved a toddler's life.

struck her as she pushed the child clear, breaking her disabled leg. Susan not only missed the family holiday to Spain—she also had to learn to walk again. As he presented her with her special prize, Mr Loring said: 'Go on being courageous, Susan, and go on being impulsive.'

achievement roll of honour

Bonsor, aged 69, of Ingham Walk, Gorton, Manchester.

Being wrongly confined to a mental institution for years, Mr Bonsor has terms with his handicaps is merely physical. He has shown amazing powers of resourcefulness.

Hughes, aged 34, of Limerock Crescent, Limerock, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Hughes has been handicapped since birth. He cannot see and is just learning to use his arms and both hands are affected, save for the ability to push with his right hand by which he propels his wheelchair backwards.

He comes from a poor background. His parents are deaf and dumb. He lives in one of the most troubled areas of Belfast. Despite all this, Joe has dedicated himself to the service of his community.

Keown, aged 41, of Cottage Industries, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Keown was not expected to walk or to be able to read. He learned to walk with the support of a collie



HAROLD Sharpe at 21 was the youngest of the nine finalists and had one of the longest journeys to make — from Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, where he is a porter at the local hospital. As his area's spastic representative he travels to meetings up and down the country.

dog. He also started school at the age of seven and completed a commercial course at the age of 18.

After a series of operations, he became involved in occupational therapy, particularly in the use of knitting machines.

Today he has built up his own shop and factory, employing five members of staff and 110 home knitters.

Joan Ross, aged 34, of Ramsey Court, Park Road, Hornsey, London N8.

Miss Ross only learned to walk in her teens after much determination. Although her education had been limited because of her handicaps, she studied at her local adult education centre. She succeeded in passing 'O' levels and 'A' levels and is now taking a degree course in Humanities.

Philip Rule, aged 45, of Gladstone Avenue, Wood Green, London N22.

Mr Rule received very limited education due to his handicaps. He was unable to take the written examination for radio, television and engineering servicing, but passed top of his class in the

practical examination. After several jobs which he held down successfully, he decided to devote his life to studying electronic engineering and to helping disabled people with their television and transistor radio repairs, which he carried out in his home free of charge. He also acts as welfare officer and adviser on the problems of the disabled.

Harold Sharpe, aged 21, of Quantock Green, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

Mr Sharpe was told by his headmaster that employment would be out of the question due to the severity of his handicaps and it would be better for him to go into residential care. He refused. He applied for several jobs but was unsuccessful. Eventually he succeeded in passing his driving test and acquired an Invacar.

After some time he was offered an assessment course in a hospital occupational therapy department. It did not appeal to him, but he took the chance out of desperation. The staff found him most helpful and his natural cheerfulness and sense of fun appealed to the patients. Eventually he got the chance to become a porter in the physiotherapy department. Not

Cont on Page 8

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Whoop of joy

Cont. from Page 6

collecting funds in Oxfam Week.

Joe is also an inveterate traveller. In addition to visiting Lourdes eight times, he attended the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games and spent six weeks travelling through Canada and the USA although he had nowhere to sleep the first time he landed in New York.



RAYMOND King, who nominated Joe Hughes for the Achievement Award was the first one to congratulate him on his success. He flew over with Joe for the ceremony.

Mr King goes on: 'So much for Joe's achievements. They can be applauded or dismissed as "gimmicky" according to one's viewpoint—what cannot be disputed, however, is the man's philosophy, which, though unspoken, touches everyone who knows him.'

It was the second year running that Mr King, Chairman, Central Committee for the Handicapped of the Northern Ireland Council of Social Ser-



WILLIAM Keown, who came second, learnt to walk with the aid of a dog. A successful businessman, he was last year awarded the MBE for his services to cottage industry.

vices, had decided to nominate Joe.

Mr King explained: 'I meant to put him forward for last year's award but I didn't remember till December 30 and the closing date was January 2. I sat up all night writing the nomination and then drove round Belfast looking for a pillar box to post it. But all the pillar and post boxes in the province have been modified to prevent letter bombs being mailed and I just couldn't find a letterbox with a wide enough slit to get the letter in.'

Joe intends to spend his winnings on a holiday and the first thing he did after the presentation was to ring his sister Bernise in London to tell her via Raymond King who'd flown from Belfast that morning with him, that he was The Spastics Society's 1976 Special Achievement Award winner.



Honour roll

Cont. from Page 7

only has he made a success of his job, but he has extended his capacity to doing other tasks on the portering pool and is regarded as a most useful member of staff.

Susan Smith, aged 28, of Grape Lane, Durham City.

Mrs Smith left school at 15, and after many attempts obtained a job in a factory. She found this boring and went to evening classes to get her 'O' levels. She obtained one and, after much thought decided to study full time at the technical college. Within two years she had gained five 'O' levels and three 'A' levels. She applied to Durham University and was accepted. At first she had to travel to and from the university which was a great physical strain. The college reluctantly agreed to let her stay in college. This proved a great boon and Susan was successful in her first year exams and was allowed to proceed to the joint honours course in sociology and social administration. Susan was awarded a second class honours degree.

Susan was one of the first severely handicapped students in a university which provided no special facilities for the handicapped, and there was an additional pressure on her to show that the disabled can, in spite of their disadvantages, be academically equal to other students.

Picture left: MRS Lily Wells came to the very first annual meeting of The Spastics Society in 1953 so she is no stranger to the Society. She is pictured receiving her finalist's £5 premium bond and medal.



PHILIP Rule repairs TV and radio sets for the disabled free of charge.

Mrs Jennifer Weller, aged 45, of Police Station Road, West Malling, Maidstone, Kent.

Mrs Weller looks after her husband and two sons, aged 11 and 13, single-handed, despite her handicaps. She also works full time running a riding school for the mentally and physically handicapped.

Her 11-year-old son Joseph writes: 'My mum is a spastic. She is the best mum in the world. That's what I think anyway. She gets up every morning at 5.30 and does all the housework, feeds six dogs, feeds the fish. Then she goes to the riding stables and feeds the ponies. Then she goes home and has breakfast and does some more work. She goes to work at 7.40 and gets home at 6 pm. Mum started to ride when she was two and the ponies she had helped her to walk. And that's what my mum does. I think she's fantastic.'

Mrs Lily Wells, aged 59, of Barnett Wood Lane, Ashted, Surrey.

Mrs Wells has to wear a leg brace and has only the use of one arm, yet the average fit person would find it exhausting to keep pace with her for a day. Lily's full time occupation is looking after her house and her spastic husband and maintaining a large garden. In her spare time she serves on a number of charitable committees and is a fund-raiser par excellence. She holds garden parties and coffee mornings at her home. Her most notable effort at one function was raising £145.



JEAN Ross, 34, wanted to teach mentally handicapped children but the authorities said her disabilities — she did not learn to walk until her 'teens' — would make it too hard for her. Jean, now taking a humanities degree said, 'I did my studying to prove them wrong as much as anything else.'

THEY PAY TRIBUTE TO HER WORK

FOLLOWING the death of Miss Ursula Ballance, announced in last month's Spastics News, a tribute has been received from Mr A. W. Brown, the Principal of the Society's Meldreth Manor School.

'Miss Ursula Ballance was more than just a frequent visitor to the school—she was firmly established as a friend and working colleague, not only because she was an easy person to relate to, but also because she was a truly professional person. Miss Ballance was expected to, and did indeed, attend most of our social functions.'

We will miss Ursula Ballance. She will always be fondly remembered by the staff here.

Miss Ballance had been a regional social worker for the Society for the last 15 years and the Controller of Personal Services, Miss Margaret Morgan, adds: 'Although in her usual thoughtful way, Miss Ballance had tried to let everyone know of her serious illness, very many families, spastic people, colleagues and local group members feel a very real sense of loss now that she is no longer with us. One of the last matters she discussed with me before her death was who was going to follow on with her work.'

'A special fund has been set up in her memory and those who would like to contribute should contact me at 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.'

It's their Jubilee too



STAMFORD and District Spastics Society celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year. The group was started by two couples — the parents of spastic girls Hazel Nicholls (now 33) and Barbara Blades (29).

Mr Nicholls is now the group secretary and Mr Blades, together with their wives and daughters still serve on the committee.

The group's main function in the early days was to locate spastics in the area, raise money and use the cash to help them and their families. Later it expanded operations to sponsor spastic children and adults in local centres. Members gave support to the society's Wilfred Pickles School at Tixover and helped

COMMITTEE members of the Stamford and District Spastic Society which has its 25th anniversary this year. Back row (left to right) chairman Mr Derek Blades, Mrs Helen Blades, Mr Derek Marjoram, Mrs Eileen Mee, Mr Albert Blades, Mrs Flo Blades, Mr

Nick Nicholls, Mrs Phyllis Nicholls (the four founder members). Front row Mrs Carol Marjoram, treasurer Mrs Shirley Beard, Mrs Joan Glenn, Miss Barbara Blades, Miss Hazel Nicholls.

Picture by courtesy of Lincoln Mercury.

provide a covered way and swimming pool for the pupils.

Then, because the group had become a victim of its own success and was unable to administer the wide area, into which it had expanded, branches were set up in Peterborough, Spalding and Oakham. The highlight of these efforts was the setting up of

the Lincolnshire Spastics Centre at Scunthorpe, the Stamford group helped buy the land.

But money is a perennial problem. Although the group raises nearly £2,000 a year, it can only just manage to maintain services with nothing over for expansion.

Charles Vbranch dies — a pioneer of care

MR Charles Vbranch who, with his wife Kay, started what has become the Devon and Exeter Spastic Society, was found dead in a caravan at the school which he administrated and which bore their name, on March 17. He had been suffering from ill-health.

Mr and Mrs Vbranch had worked for 20 years on behalf of spastics and launched the local group with funds of just over 50p after one of their three sons was born handicapped. Their efforts resulted in the building of a purpose-built school with every facility for 50 spastic pupils, and just before it was opened in 1970 the couple were told it was to be named after them.

The school's headmaster, Mr Stanley Johnson, said:

'We are all shocked and saddened by Mr Vbranch's death and he is already greatly missed. The school will be a living monument to him but his loss is a great tragedy.'

Rent-a-chair — new scheme

THE Biddle Engineering Co has launched a rent-a-chair scheme whereby a disabled person can have any one of the BEC electric wheelchairs for a deposit of £50 and, depending on the model, repayments of £11-£20 a month spread over two years. At the end of this period the 'hirer' would pay 50p a year until payment is complete.

Full details of the scheme can be obtained from the managing director, Biddle Engineering Co Ltd, 103 Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3UB

Have you seen Susie?

ONE of the Society's workforce at London Headquarters has gone missing, believed 'kidnapped' by mistake. Susie, a tortoiseshell cat who with brother, Barry John, was a rodent operative in the basement of the rambling building in Park Crescent, has been missing since the middle of March, when a number of weekend conferences were

held. It is feared that someone attending one of these meetings thought Susie was a stray from outside and, thinking they were doing her a kindness, took her home. It is hoped that if this is the case she will be returned to her post in the mail room where she is missed by all her workmates, not least her brother, who is pining away.

Alan has made it in more ways than one

ALAN SPARKE from the little village of Bacton in rural Suffolk will never make a fortune from his money boxes, but they are going to make him famous. Famous not just because his intricate money boxes are so sought after, but because Alan is a severely handicapped spastic and an inspiration to other disabled people determined to do a useful job of work.

Now Alan, aged 28, who lives at home with his farmworker father and devoted mother, will 'star' in an illustrated leaflet being produced by The Spastics Society. It will tell the public about the efforts made by spastics to find some sort of employment in a world where even jobs for the able-bodied are very scarce. At the same time it will encourage other handicapped people to get rid of the idea that they are on the employment scrap heap.

Many jobs for the heavily handicapped are boring and repetitive. Alan is lucky that his 'work' incorporates his hobby of woodwork, and he takes the pride of craftsmanship in making his money boxes.

Very unusual money boxes they are. They look like Swiss chalets, complete with shuttered windows, sloping roof, log piles, entrance porch, and even an outside bench for sitting to enjoy the Alpine scenery. The only detail missing seems to be anywhere to put the money in—or take it out again.

It isn't that Alan has forgotten that purchasers want to actually put coins into his money boxes—he has given them a unique touch. Each rustic chalet has two 'secret' openings crafty enough to baffle the gnomes of Zurich, and it is no wonder that they attract buyers on sight.

Alan makes his money boxes with the aid of a fretwork power saw in a little workshop which was once an old pantry. They are sold at £1.80 a time, retail, throughout the country, by the Homework Department of The Spastics Society, which has a continuous demand for Alan's Suffolk-made Swiss chalets.

Unfortunately, because Alan is so handicapped and confined to a wheelchair, and because the money boxes are so complex, he can't turn out many. The cash he earns will never be more than just a little extra pocket money. But it is the



Alan with his Suffolk made Swiss chalets. They attract buyers on sight.

making of them that matters—the fact that a young man who would be perfectly justified in sitting back in his wheelchair and letting others do everything for him, has the satisfaction of working, and 'doing something useful.'

Not bad for someone whom doctors once thought would spend his life in hospital. 'When he was a baby, the medical people told me that he would never leave his bed,' said Mrs Jennifer Sparke. 'But Alan has always been very determined. We are very proud of him.'

Though Alan has made over 2,000 Swiss chalets in the last

10 years, he has never been to Switzerland to see a real chalet, and hasn't any ambition to do so. He doesn't get out much, and when a special order came last summer just before the family's holiday, he was quite happy to stay at home to rush it through.

The Spastics Society is proud of Alan's achievement and the new leaflet will emphasise that spastics like him do not ask for pity, but for the chance to gain fulfilment and a little independence through the dignity of work.

While Alan is pleased that his determination and enthusiasm will be used as an

encouragement to other handicapped people, he rather wonders what all the fuss is about. 'There is nothing special about me,' he says modestly. 'I just like making money boxes.'

And he wheeled himself off to his tiny workshop to make another one. It will take him a long time, he won't get much money for it, but the box will bring pleasure to someone Alan will never meet. Most important of all, Alan has made it. In more ways than one.

Sheila Jenner

A big bus - a massive saving

COACHBUILDING apprentices at Blackpool College of Technology and Art have designed and built a 21-seater bus specially adapted for spastics passengers. The project will save Crewe Spastics Society about £16,000.

The Crewe group approached the college's vehicle bodywork department after hearing of similar work it had done for other charities. The college welcomed the project as it gave the apprentices who train there part-time a chance to work on the vehicle from scratch. It took three years for the coach to be completed, with about 12 students working on it each year.

Special features include double doors and a wheelchair lift. The bus is estimated to be worth approximately £20,000 but cost the Crewe Spastics Society just over £4,000 for a chassis and material costs. Special features include double doors and a large wheelchair lift at the back.

Duck Inn's gift

CUSTOMERS of the Duck Inn, Laverstock, Wiltshire, have raised £150 for the Wiltshire appeal fund for a day centre with residential facilities for multi-handicapped school leavers. The cheque was received by Mrs Joyce Smith, a vice-chairman of the Society and chairman of Salisbury and District Spastics Association.



For him, a double celebration

DAVID Johnston, Headmaster of Percy Hedley School, Newcastle-on-Tyne, which is affiliated to The Spastics Society, is pictured outside Buckingham Palace after receiving the MBE from the Queen Mother. His wife Chris and niece Allison Parker accompanied him to the Investiture.

Mr Johnston, who this year celebrates his silver jubilee in residential special education, has been head of Percy Hedley since 1963.

Therapist advises new speech project

MRS Ena Davies, Speech Therapist at the Society's Craig-y-Parc School in South Wales, has been appointed adviser to a new research project concerned with a pictorial sign language for children who cannot speak.

Up to now, severely handicapped spastics and others without intelligible speech have communicated by pointing to letters on an alphabet board, the use of a 'Lightwriter' or ordinary typewriter, and by hand sign language. The Bliss Symbols Communications System, however, can be used with young and retarded children because neither 'speaker' nor 'listener' needs to be able to read and spell.

The symbols were invented

more than 30 years ago by Charles Bliss, an Austrian who survived a Nazi concentration camp and was determined to do something which would lead to better understanding between nations.

Inspired by Chinese ideographic writing, he invented an international language of picture symbols. But the system failed to attract interest until in 1971 a Canadian teacher of the handicapped came across a book by Charles Bliss and thought the symbols could be used to help cerebral palsied children communicate.

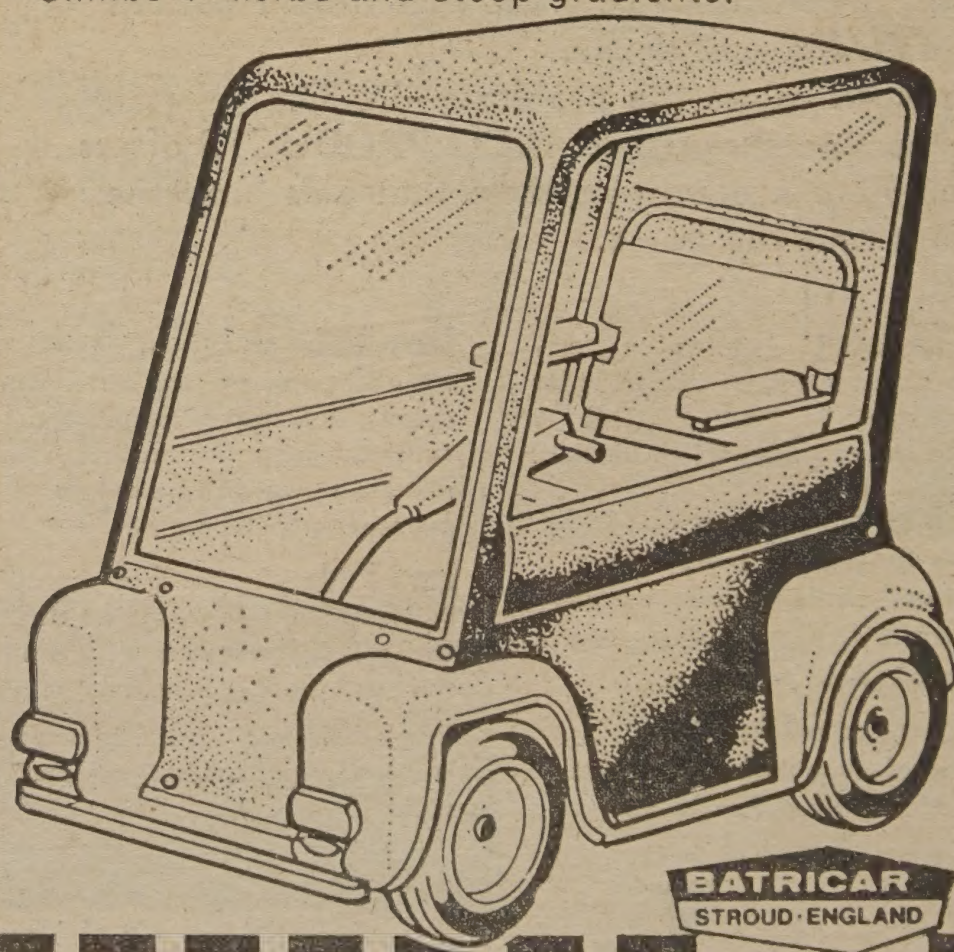
Since then the symbols have been successfully tried out in

a number of British special schools and Action Research for the Crippled Child has now given a grant of £20,000 for further development of the system. The money will provide facilities for a recognised adviser (Mrs Davies); the preparation of teaching materials, the organisation of training courses and a clearing house for the exchange of ideas. Research programmes will be co-ordinated and a national evaluation of the system carried out.

Mrs Davies will be supported by a committee representing Chailey Heritage School and Hospital, Sussex, Heathfield School, Farnham, the Inner London Education Authority and the Scottish Council for Spastics.

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WINDOW ON WALES

by Emlyn Davies

Proud day for Yvonne

THE Wales Region is proud of the award of the Director's Commendation Medal to Yvonne Berry of Haverfordwest. Yvonne, a 21-year-old severely handicapped spastic, has so progressed in swimming that she is now able to swim more than a mile.

Yvonne has been assisted by Mr Richard Gau, who runs 'Swimming for the Disabled' every Tuesday and Thursday at Haverfordwest swimming baths.

It was felt that somebody who had also shown the same grit and determination in swimming should be asked to present the medal to Yvonne, and 17-year-old Ann Adams agreed to do so.

Ann is ranked seventh in the

world in the international medley 200, has also held every Welsh swimming championship, has won over 300 medals and has competed in the Montreal Olympics, Commonwealth, European and World Games.

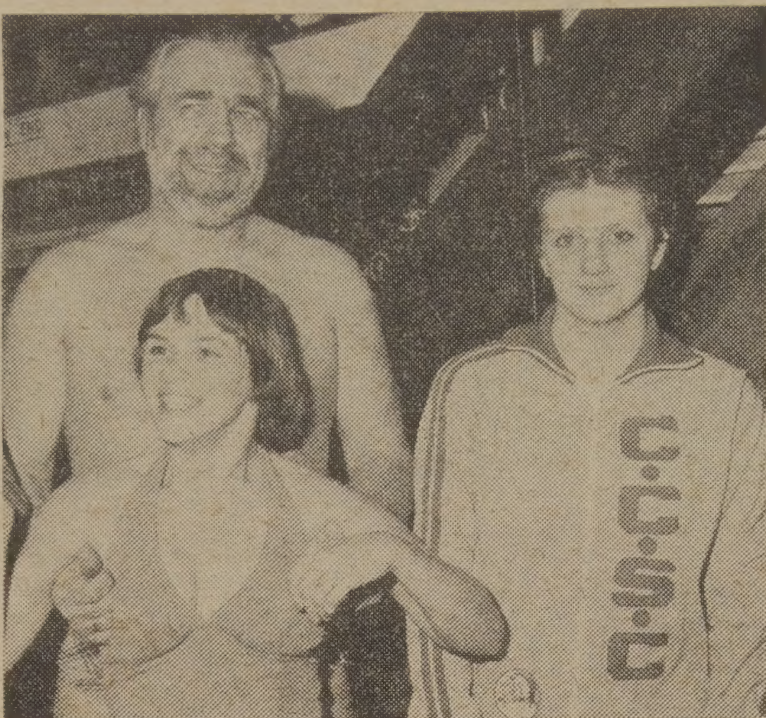
Ann also presented to Yvonne a £5 premium bond and her own personal gift to mark the occasion.

Yvonne presented Ann with a pennant from the Montreal Olympic Games, given by Lord Parry, who introduced the ceremony.

TO raise funds for the proposed holiday to be given to a number of disabled people, including five spastics, in the Pembrokeshire area, the people of Haverfordwest are being asked to donate all the Greenshield stamps they can save. The trip is to be made in the now famous Jumbulance to Germany in June, and much money is still required to enable the trip to go ahead.

If you have any Greenshield stamps, please send them to the secretary of Pembrokeshire Spastics Society, Mrs Valerie Gau, 68 St Martin's Park, Haverfordwest, Dyfed.

A mass of Greenshield stamps were presented by Lord Parry to Mrs Valerie Gau, Yvonne Berry and Mr Jimmy Gillard following the presentation to Yvonne Berry.



YVONNE Berry, Ann Adams and Richard Gau, leader of 'Swimming for the Disabled,' at the presentation. Yvonne is unable to stand unaided.

Celebrity holiday for two

CONGRATULATIONS to John Roberts, the Regional Officer for Wales, on his recent appearance as a contestant on the ITV programme, 'Celebrity Squares.'

John won a holiday for his wife and himself in Portugal

plus over £300 in money, but he was very successful in getting a good 'plug' for The Spastics Society and its volunteers at the beginning of each part of the programme.

Congratulations to John and I hope he and his wife have a fabulous holiday in Portugal.

Spare time studying won degree

YOU would think being in full-time occupation plus being chairman of a large local group would be enough for most people, but not for Mr Owen Lewis, Chairman of Swansea and District Spastics Association. Owen, who has been studying with the Open University, has been awarded his BA degree.

Since 1971

Owen has been studying in his spare time since January 1971 when the Open University came into being and has completed all courses during that time.

Owen has told me that he has found that a number of disabled persons have also been studying with him.

THE Carnegies are at it again with their jewellery sales. This incredible husband and wife team have, for the second year running, sold over £1,000 worth of jewellery. One's immediate reaction is to say, 'How do they do it?' and we congratulate them.



MISS Frances Morgan is a ballet teacher, who lives in Swansea. However, in addition to teaching young girls to dance, she also bears in mind the problems and frustrations of those who are unable to dance.

Miss Morgan, therefore, organised a performance by her ballet students to raise money for Swansea and District Spastics Association's centre at 'Longfields.' As a result she was able to present a cheque for £200 to Mr Owen Lewis, Swansea Group (above).

The presentation, made at 'Longfields,' was attended by executive members of the association and officers of the Ladies' Guild.

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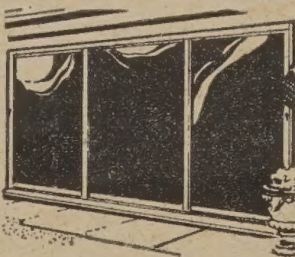
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News about the Spastics Pool

Wins trip down under

WINNING first prize in a special competition for Spastics Pool supporters means a holiday of a lifetime in Australia and the Far East for John Fraser Murison and his wife Madeline.

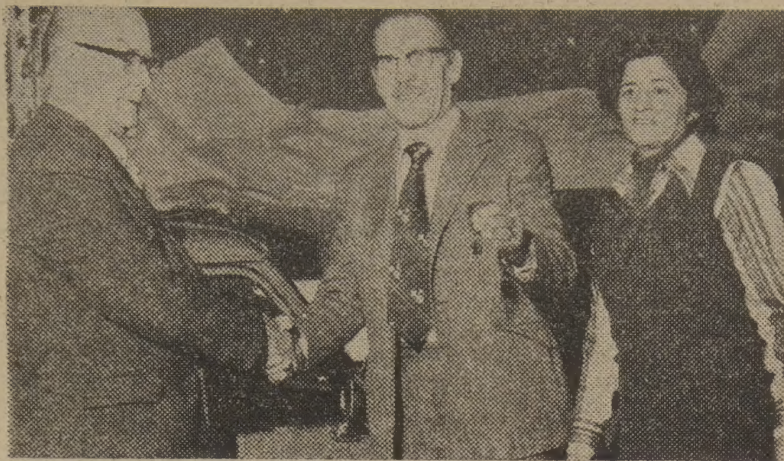
They couldn't believe their good luck when Roy Laver, Director of Top Ten, Alan Pinfold, of Qantas Airways, Derek Hudson, of Top Ten Travel, and area supervisor Mr Anderson, called at the Murison's home in Fraserburgh to deliver the news.

Their success in the competition has caused them quite a headache, as they can't make up their minds which of the exotic cities in the Far East and Australia to include in their itinerary. Their three-week holiday will, of course, be a first class affair.

Good start for photo service

THE new photographic service exclusive to supporters of the Spastics Pool has got off to a very encouraging start. The special envelopes are being returned daily to the marketing department for processing.

For further information write to Martin Handford, marketing department, Westmorland House, 104 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS99 7QX.



MR George Assanakis, of Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, was one of five first prize winners in a national Charm Girl Competition for Pool supporters. He received his prize of a new mini from Mr Bill Thomas, left, secretary of the Gloucester and District Spastics Society at the ICI Fibres Sports and Social Club, Brockworth. Also pictured is Mrs Assanakis.

His idea gives 24 million gifts

MR Geoffrey Long retired on April 1 as a Director of Top Ten Promotions Limited, the promoters of the Spastics Pool.

'G.A.' as he became known to distinguish him from the other Long brothers within the organisation, joined Regional Pool Promotions Limited in February, 1958, after over 20 years in the electricity supply industry. His association with Francis Van Neste and Douglas Arter, the General Manager and Secretary of RPP Ltd, had commenced some years earlier in a part-time capacity, and when the existing expertise on pool competitions was proposed to be channelled into raising much needed funds for charity, he was invited to join the organisation full-time.

He was one of many who gave up a secure position elsewhere to enter the unknown

field of charity fund raising, and now with the comforting thought that over £34 million has been raised for spastics and other charities, he can look back with some satisfaction on the decision he made then.

His forte was administration and he was subsequently appointed Assistant General Manager. It was G.A. who in 1959 dreamed up the idea of a gift scheme to be included in the package of benefits offered to members of the spastics competition—an idea so popular that by now 24 million gifts have been distributed under the scheme.

G.A. was appointed to the Board of RPP Ltd in 1966 on the retirement of Mr Van Neste, and he was also Managing Director of Goodprint Supplies Limited, who provided the gifts for the scheme.

Workshop for brains rather than brawn

WORK has started on a major new development in the Neath Hill area of the new city of Milton Keynes. The project is a joint one between The Spastics Society and the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, and will provide both independent living

accommodation for the severely disabled, and a workshop for people of a high intellectual ability.

Twenty-four flats are being built within a radius of a quarter of a mile of the 'Intellectual Workshop.' Eighteen of these will be standard three-person units specially adapted to provide accommodation for one or two per-

sons. The remaining six units are designed for one person (two at a squeeze) and will be situated adjacent to the 'Intellectual Workshop.'

Two four-bedroomed houses will be provided for staff, one of which will contain a sick bay or meeting place.

The 'Intellectual Workshop' is an idea that has been with the Society for several years.

It is envisaged that it will provide a working environment for 12 university graduates or professional qualified people, who will either pool their resources or work independently in an environment designed to give them every opportunity to utilise their potential to the full.

The intention is to set up a business organisation to provide worthwhile and possibly lucrative employment. A 'work finder' will be employed to assist in making contact with potential clients.

Sources of employment for other people are still under discussion. Some may find outside employment but the Society is looking at the possibility of providing a shop or launderette which could be operated on a rota system by those who wish to work there.

Those who would like more information about the project, or who may be interested in moving to Milton Keynes should contact Miss M. Morgan, Controller of Personal Social Services, Family Services and Assessment Centre, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.



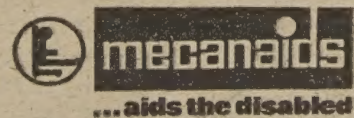
DOUGLAS Arter, Chairman of Top Ten Promotions, handing over a first dividend cheque of over £714 to Mrs Sonya Shelley of Bristol at a special presentation in the directors' lounge at Westmorland House on March 17.

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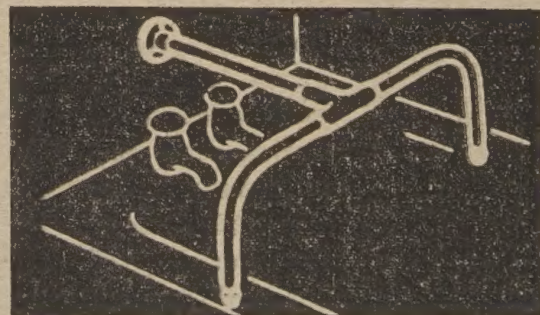
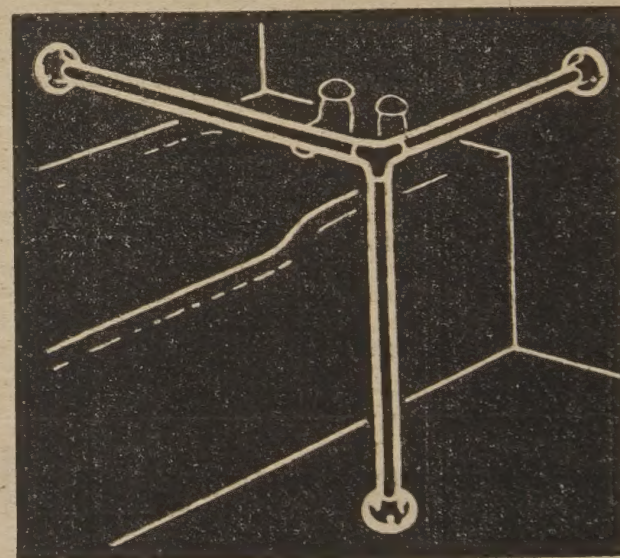
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Society's latest venture probes world markets

THE Spastics Society, which has been in the export business for many years with its unique lightweight wheelchair, 'The Newton,' is now capitalising on its expertise in the field of disablement.

It set up recently a subsidiary company, Newton Aids Ltd, which has just acquired a factory, on the Dolphin Industrial Estate, Southampton Road, Salisbury, Wilts, and provided much-needed jobs in the area.

Newton Aids Ltd was established as a separate organisation to research and develop special aids for the handi-

capped as well as to expand the world market for the famous Newton wheelchairs which are manufactured at the Society's Birmingham Sheltered Workshop. Already 75 per cent of these chairs are sold abroad. Recent marketing efforts in the USA have resulted in orders of over \$100,000. Distributors have now been established in most parts of the world, and sales are increasing dramatically in a number of countries.

A series of other wheelchairs to suit differing handicaps will also be promoted, including an indoor powered chair easy to manoeuvre in confined spaces. These will be manufactured at Salisbury along with a number of aids for feeding, mobility and recreation.

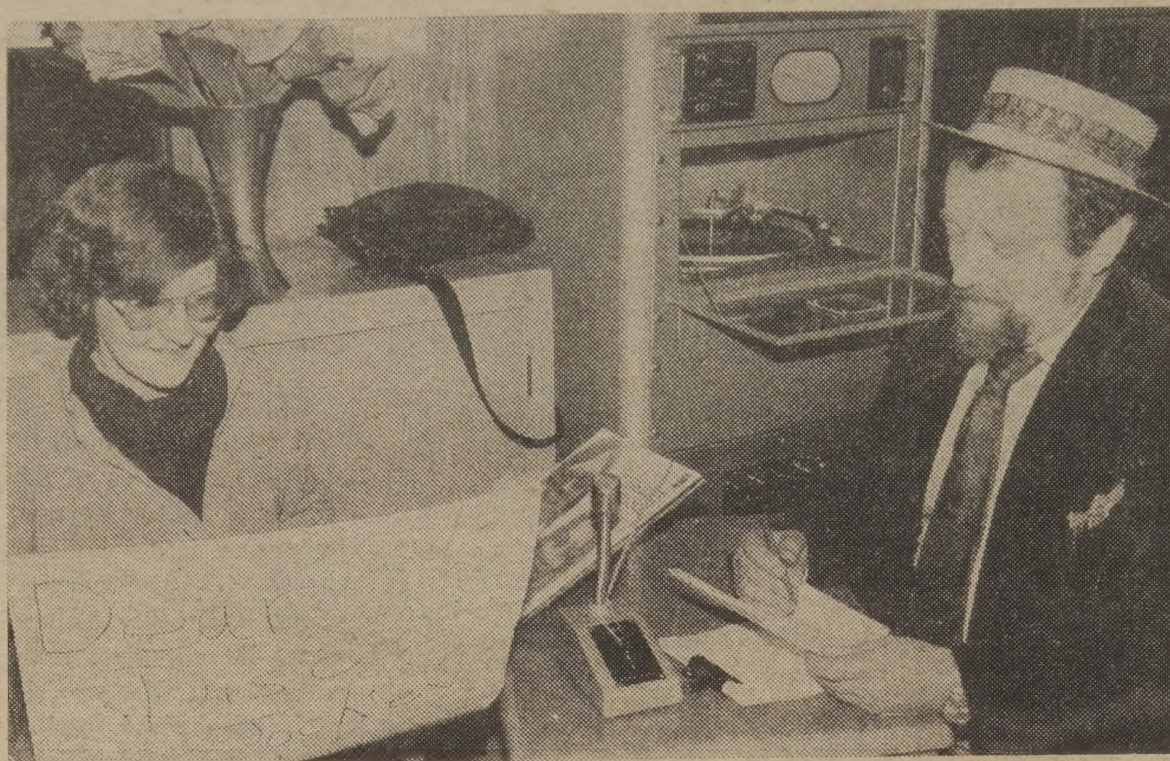
The company is aiming at a turnover of £1 million by April 1978, and the factory will be fully competitive with other commercial concerns. But all profits will be covenanted to The Spastics Society, thus benefiting disabled people.

Said Mr Ray Hodgkinson, General Manager of Newton Aids Ltd, 'We shall be manufacturing a variety of new and unique aids for the handicapped that other firms do not supply. These will be developed from ideas that the Society has accumulated over the years, as it is a natural magnet for innovations to make life more normal and simpler for people with handicaps.'

The company will also offer a valuable service to the handicapped. It will see disabled people in their own homes, in hospitals, residential centres or special schools — preferably with an occupational therapist present — and advise them on the right aids to suit their particular problems.

Newton Aids Ltd also hopes to be able to offer hire purchase facilities to make it possible for handicapped people, usually in the lower income brackets, to afford some of the more expensive aids.

As turnover increases, the factory will, where possible, supply vital sub-contract work to work centres for the handicapped which are run by The Spastics Society in various parts of the country.



RADIO Meldreth takes to the air with Mrs Gail Barrow, teacher and Wednesday evening disc jockey, and Mr Roy 'Mugsy' French, domestic supervisor and the station's newsreader, at the mike.

Their radio show is high spot of week

EVERY Wednesday during term-time the children of the Society's Meldreth Manor School can be found clustered round the speakers of the school's public address system, as soon as tea is over at 5.30. It's the high spot of their week for over the air

comes their very own 'Radio Meldreth' which has been broadcasting their record requests, providing a local news bulletin and a favourite story in serial form, for two terms now.

The requests come in from parents, from the staff and

from the children themselves. Birthdays are always marked with a special dedication.

Now 'Radio Meldreth' is broadcasting a special request of its own — it would welcome more singles to add to the record library and a visit from any professional DJ's.

'Prevention should have priority'

KEEPING one severely handicapped spastic person from birth to the age of 65 could cost the community nearly £4 million. For this reason it was sound economic sense to prevent handicap, Mr James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society, told the International Cerebral Palsy Society Conference at Oxford, on March 31.

The field of prevention had been neglected. Concentration had been on caring for the handicapped. In Britain it was estimated that 40,000 children have cerebral palsy. Between a quarter and a third were severely physically and/or mentally handicapped.

Knowledge of prevention was extensive in Britain, but much remained to be applied. Handicap could have been avoided in about 50 per cent of all cases if all the available knowledge had been applied. Action and re-education of medical personnel were urgently required.

He called on spastics societies throughout the world to bring pressure to re-deploy health service money into the fields of research and prevention.

Conference looks ahead

THE Midlands region of The Spastics Society held its ninth annual conference on April 3 at Leicester University. Chaired by Lord Crawshaw, its theme was: 'Looking to the future.'

After the welcoming address by Mr F. F. Wright, chairman of the Regional Co-ordinating Committee, delegates from all over the Midlands heard a variety of speakers. The Society's Head of Employment, Mr Philip Dyer spoke on employment prospects for handicapped school leavers and adults. Dr Eva Alberman of Guy's Hospital's Paediatric Research Unit spoke on research into the causes of cerebral palsy and Mr Dennis Gray, Special Education Inspector's theme was on the future of special education.

In the afternoon there were discussions on group's home visitors and then Mr R. G. Brooks, FCA, the Society's Director of Finance, spoke on the financial problems facing the Society.

Full coverage of the conference will appear in next month's issue of 'Spastics News'.

Sharing their problems

BANBURY and District Spastics Society, Oxon, has started the Sparrows Club — an informal play group and coffee morning for young spastic children and their parents. Mothers can meet and unwind over a cup of coffee, discuss mutual problems and watch their children play together.

Mrs Fiona Baker, chairman of the Banbury group, said, 'As the mother of a spastic child I know that the chance to talk to other parents in a friendly atmosphere and share experiences can be more help than all the professional advice in the world.'

There are many things I and other members have learned the hard way and we feel that we can help parents facing similar problems. Equally we hope parents of older children will come along and give us some pointers for the future.'



A new challenge for the 'White Witch'

LIZ Sorrell is well-known to readers of 'Spastics News' as the white witch who reads fortunes, casts spells and runs an advice service by telephone as well as being a winner of last year's Literary Award run by the Society. Now Liz, a spastic, has been called on to perform an exorcism.

'A girl came to my Tottenham flat for a Tarot card reading and mentioned that she was troubled by an unhappy presence at her home. She asked me if I knew any incantations to get rid of it.'

'I agreed and I was taken by car to the home in Muswell Hill. When I got there I was asked if I read palms — I don't, but I do "read" faces so I was given seven photos and asked what the subjects' characters were like.'

'They were satisfied then because I was so accurate and then I performed the exorcism.'

'I chanted the incantations, touching each surface of the particular room affected as I did so. You could feel the atmosphere as soon as you entered — someone had been deeply unhappy.'

'I left a box of charms to keep trouble away. It con-

tained salt which represents plenty, a nine-nailed horse-shoe for good luck, two doves enamelled on a stone to represent peace and sealed the box. If the seal is broken the charm is lost.'

'I also burnt an effigy of a heart with four pins sticking in it which draws the curse back on the spirit from which it emanates, so that it gets no peace till it leaves them alone.'

Liz warns that witchcraft practised by the inexperienced can be very, very dangerous.

Literary Contest

LITERARY contest for the handicapped, 1977. Don't forget the closing date for entries is April 9.

There are two categories for children's work, an adult section and a poetry competition open to all ages. Entries should be sent to Mrs Nina Heycock, 27-33 Harrington Gardens, London SW7 4JT.

£900 from Concert appeal

A DISTINGUISHED audience gathered at the Royal Albert Hall on March 26 for a performance of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, marking the 150th anniversary of the composer's death and in aid of the Society's Ingfield Manor School.

Guest of honour was the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Robin Gillett, seen here with left, Mr D. G. L. Bean, Chairman of the Society's Appeals Committee and Mrs Bean, and right, Mr P. P. Rigby, Executive Committee member and Mr and Mrs Ian Dawson Shepherd, Executive Committee member and former chairman. Other dignitaries included the Bishop of London and his Excellency the Ambassador of Oman, Mr N. S. Bualy.

The Bishop of London's Appeal, made at the concert, raised about £900.

David can help himself



DAVID Hendy, 8, and his fellow spastics at the White Lodge Centre, Chertsey, Surrey, can now be more independent in the centre's hydrotherapy pool, thanks to Egham Round Table. The tablers have presented two specially-made stainless steel bars which span the width of the pool and enable young bathers to support themselves unaided.

Said the centre's principal, Carol Myer, 'The bars will teach the children to use their arms and legs and not rely so heavily on adult helpers.'

Pictured in the pool are (left to right) Carol Myer, David Burridge, Chairman of Egham Round Table; and David Hendy.